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Dr. Charles Costner

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**Total children in county under age 6: 1,760**

**Total Children in county living in poverty %: 21.9%**

**Abbeville County Highlights**

- Joint County Child Care Training 300 participants
- Distributed over 6,000 books to children during FY09
- Provided parenting services to over 299 families.
- Provided 174 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- Served over 8,300 children with our child care trainings

# Abbeville County First Steps Partnership *Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Report*

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE**

Our County Partnership had a great year in 2009. Even though we have had to lose some great staff members due to budget cuts, we are still continuing to move forward. We have established relationships with the Department of Social Services and the Guardian Ad Litem Programs. We are working closely with these agencies to ensure quality parenting services for mothers, fathers, and children. Our new fatherhood initiative has really grown and there is more local support than we could have ever imagined. The fatherhood initiative and Parents as Teachers Program work jointly to include the entire family. The father was the missing component in our programs for many years. By using the holistic approach and working with the entire family, we are starting to see change happen. Other agencies and partners in our community are starting to see change as well and want to be a part of this initiative.

We are very proud of our joint collaboration with Greenwood County First Steps. Abbeville and Greenwood Counties have been collaborating for six years, sharing administrative and programmatic resources. Last year we were able to provide quality child care trainings with approved certified trainers to 111 facilities and 737 staff members. We provided 77 training sessions and over 110 DSS credit hours. The year was highlighted by a joint county child care conference at Lander University with over 300 participants. We were able to impact over 8,300 children because of our child care trainings!

Sincerely,  
Angela S. Pruitt  
Executive Director  
Abbeville First Steps

## **First Steps to School Readiness Strategy Areas**

*The First Steps initiative approaches children's school readiness needs in five ways:*

**Family Strengthening:** A parent is a child's first and best teacher. First Steps works to help parents become the best parents they can be. First Steps also helps parents further their own education.

**Healthy Start:** Children's development and ability to learn are profoundly impacted by their health in the earliest years. First Steps works to help families understand children's health needs through education and screenings while also working to help them access needed health services.

**Quality Child Care:** Quality child care provides immediate and long-term learning benefits for children. First Steps works to expand the availability of quality child-care to families and to enhance the level of quality in existing child-care environments.

**Early Education:** Research shows that children who participate in high-quality preschool classes are more likely to start school ready to learn, as well as be more successful later in life. First Steps works to expand high-quality 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten opportunities in public and private settings.

**School Transition:** The transition into kindergarten is a critical time that sets the tone for children's perspectives about the school years, as well their parents' perspectives. Making a strong initial connection between school and home -- and supporting both parents and students during this transition time -- has been shown to impact students' later school success and parents' later involvement during the school years.

## **FAMILY STRENGTHENING.**

### **Parents as Teachers**

**Program description:** Parent educators provide home visits twice a month and monthly parent meetings. Books are given on each home visit, and at family meetings. Each child in the program has developmental, vision, hearing, and dental screenings. Parent educators set goals for each parent and child, and develop an individual service plan for each family based on the family goals. Many parents in the program are mandated referrals from the Department of Social Services as part of their treatment plan with Child Protective Services. The Guardian Ad Litem provides many referrals as well. Parent Educators drive the Preschool Learning Bus, as a recruitment tool for the program, throughout the community. The Parents as Teachers Program is closely linked with the Fatherhood Initiative to encourage involvement of fathers in both programs.

### **Program results:**

- 79 Adults and 112 children
- 916 visits were completed with parents and children to provide school readiness techniques and developmental information

- 1,069.99 hours were spent on home visits
- Each family received an average of 1.7 visits a month.
- 100% of parent educators have been trained with the Parents As Teachers 03 & 3-5 training with the Born to Learn Curriculum
- 100% of children had developmental screenings

### **Fatherhood Initiative**

**Program Description:** The Real Fathers are Dads program mission is to equip, educate, and empower fathers with the necessary tools to engage positively in their children's quest to be successful. This initiative is designed to target fathers with children prenatal to five years old. The fatherhood administrator conducted evening workshops twice a month, recruited participants and community speakers for the program, and fostered community involvement. Workshop topics included budgeting and financial management, self-esteem, responsibility, parenting, and life skills. The curriculums included 24/7 Dad and Doctor Dad. Many referrals were mandated through the Department of Social Services and the Department of Juvenile Justice as part of a treatment plan under Child Protective Services. There were high level needs such as domestic violence, anger management, child abuse and neglect, and substance abuse. Many fathers continued to attend workshops once their treatment plans were closed. Books were given to children in the program and literacy was promoted in all sessions with an emphasis on the importance of the fathers' role in their children's lives. Finally, fathers were encouraged to attend the monthly Parents As Teachers meetings with the mothers in the program. Many fathers participated actively in both programs.

### **Program results:**

- Over 220 participants attended the workshops, with an average of 18 participants at each session.
- Participants received 19 sessions and at least 20 hours of training throughout the year.
- Fatherhood Administrator received training through the National Fatherhood Institute
- Fatherhood Administrator is trained with the 24/7 DAD and Doctor Dad Curriculums
- Individual training sessions on budget and financial management was offered to 100% of participants

## **QUALITY CHILD CARE.**

### **Centers of Excellence**

Program description: All Centers of Excellence families received comprehensive services including quality childcare, scholarships, and parenting (inclusive of the fatherhood workshops). The parenting numbers are reflected above.

**Scholarships Initiative:** Scholarships were offered to low-income children and families with high needs.

Program results:

- 33 families and 39 children received child care scholarships
- 100% of all families received parenting services
- 100% of children received screenings in the child care setting and in the homes
- 100% of children and families attended at least one parent meeting
- 100% of families received quarterly meetings with a team to review their child's progress

### **Quality Childcare:**

Program results: Technical assistance was offered weekly to child care providers to promote quality care and education

- Over 69 children, 0-5 years old, received quality childcare based on the technical assistance and trainings.
- 15 employees at two local centers attended the Creative Curriculum Training
- 174 hours of technical assistance was offered to both centers to improve their classroom environment and developing continuing educational plans for all staff.

### **Quality Child Care Trainings:**

Program results: Improve the quality of child care by conducting trainings with certified trainers and assistance to child care providers. Counties share resources and work jointly with child care providers from neighboring counties (Greenwood & McCormick) to provide certified child care credit hours.

- 8,300 children, 737 staff, and 111 facilities
- 77 Quality Child Care Training Sessions
- Over 110 hours of Certified Training hours with DSS credit
- Joint Child Care Conference with Greenwood County First Steps with over 280 participants and serving more than 19 counties.

## **SCHOOL TRANSITION.**

### **Countdown to Kindergarten**

**Program description:** Five kindergarten teachers conducted eight intensive home visits for five year olds, during the summer months, before they started kindergarten. The home visits consisted of lesson plans and materials for families to use at home and in the classroom. The last visit was a trip to each child's new kindergarten classroom. At the end of the program, a celebration program at EdVenture Children's Museum in Columbia was offered.

### **Program results:**

- 39 children were served by the program  
After completing eight home visits:
- 25% more families would keep a regular bedtime or schedule with their children

- 16% more stated that they would draw and paint with their children
- 12% more stated that they would involve their children in more household activities
- 10% more stated that they would read books to their children

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

<b><u>Expenditures</u> By Funding Source</b>	
State Appropriation ( <i>Fund 10</i> )	\$103,361
E.I.A. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 55</i> )	\$59,280
C.O.E. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 65</i> )	\$229,600
Local Private ( <i>Fund 20</i> )	\$18,473
Federal ( <i>Fund 30</i> )	\$53,410
In-Kind ( <i>Fund 25</i> )	\$16,639
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$480,763</b>

<b><u>Expenditures</u> By Program / Strategy Name</b>	
Parents As Teachers	\$147,280
Fatherhood Initiative	\$67,088
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$8,016
Childcare Quality Enhancement	\$41,524
Childcare Training and Professional Development	\$43,382
Scholarship Initiatives	\$121,251
Indirect Programmatic Functions	\$19,353
Administrative Functions	\$32,869
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$480,763</b>

## NOTABLE DONORS

<b><i>DONOR'S NAME</i></b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Abbeville Savings and Loan	\$1,100

Abbeville Seaboard Credit Union	\$100
Bank of America	\$3,000
Belk	\$171.42
Family Medicine and Associates	\$100.00
Abbeville Sporting Goods	\$100.00
Greater Abbeville Federal Credit Union	\$100.00
Abbeville & Greenwood Jaycees	\$60.00
Hite and Stone Attorneys at Law	\$25.00
James Gettys	\$50.00
James A. Timmerman III	\$25.00
The Commercial Bank	\$50.00
Walmart Foundation	\$2,000
<b>TOTAL: \$6,881.42</b>	

***Local Match Percentage for FY 2009: 54.43%***  
*(at least 15% Legislative requirement)*

## **COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Charles Costner, Board Chair: Provider of Early Childhood Education  
Brad Evans, Vice Chair, Business Community  
Henry Green, Secretary: Legislative Appointee

Melody Griffin: Child Care and Early Childhood Development/Education Provider  
Dr. Randall T. Ruble: Faith Community  
Joe Bryson: Faith Community  
Pam Randolph: Family Education, Training and Support Provider  
Tracey Jackson: Health Care Provider  
Jane Agan: Non-Profit Organization that Provides Services to Families and Children  
Marvin McCouller: Parent of a Pre-School Child  
Hillary Brown: Parent of a Preschool Child  
Stacia Powell: Parent of a Preschool Child  
Joanne Johnson: Pre-Kindergarten through Primary Educator  
Gail Johnson: Provider of Early Childhood Education  
Frankie McNair: Provider of Early Childhood Education  
Yvonne Hill: Provider of Early Childhood Education  
Jean Smith: School District Appointee  
Mary Elizabeth Land: Library Appointee  
Delano Freeman: Head Start Appointee  
Mary Stackhouse: Health Department Appointee  
Tamikia Jackson-Williams: DSS Appointee  
Barry Jacks: Legislative Appointee

## **COUNTY DATA SNAPSHOT**

In FY09, First Steps County Partnerships statewide made it a priority to become increasingly data-driven. County Partnerships successfully began using powerful new

components of the First Steps data system, and County Partnerships also utilized data in new ways to drive their FY09 program plans. In addition to enhanced program data tracking, County Partnerships are also focusing on the best available data about children and families to best understand their communities' needs. At the end of FY08 and the beginning of FY09, County Partnerships began an extensive analysis of this data, including data about the risk factors known to impact children's potential school success, such as low birth weight, teen mothers, and families living in poverty. A county-level risk data report is included in the subsequent pages of this report.

*The SC General Assembly created in 1999 the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Initiative as a "comprehensive, results-oriented initiative for improving early childhood development by providing, through county partnerships, public and private funds and support for high quality early childhood development and education services for children by providing support for their families' efforts toward enabling their children to reach school ready to learn"...here's what happened next:*

First Steps Strategy Areas	Notable Moments
Family Strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Fatherhood Initiative in Abbeville County, and involving fathers in school readiness</li> <li>• Partnerships throughout the community for the Learning Bus Project</li> </ul>
Quality Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centers of Excellence, offering comprehensive services to children and families with quality childcare and parenting services.</li> </ul>

Other notable moments: Establishing a joint partnership with Greenwood County First Steps Board and staff in order to reach more children by sharing administrative and programmatic resources, and developing partnerships across the state.





# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

## Abbeville County

Total Children Under Six: 1,865

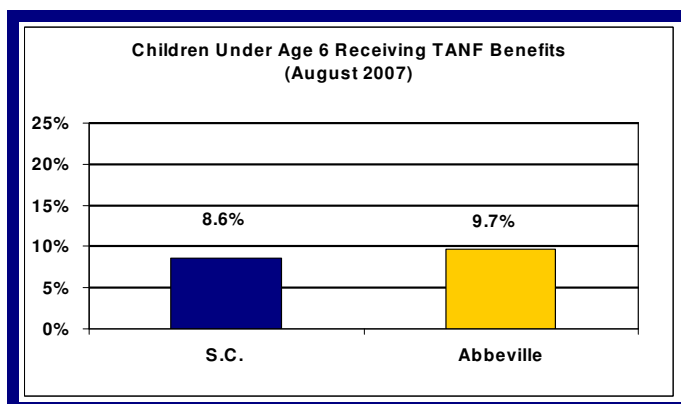
### CHILD POVERTY (Children in Families Receiving TANF Benefits)

Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%

Abbeville County (2007): 9.7%

***Fast Fact:*** Roughly 1 in 10 Abbeville County children has an annual family income equivalent to \$10,325 (or less) for a family of four. A recent statewide analysis suggests that 45% of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

- Children in deep poverty often face a wide variety of school readiness obstacles, ranging from inadequate prenatal care and nutrition to low maternal education.
- 181 of Abbeville County’s 1,860 children under age 6 received federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits during 2007, indicating a family income at or below 50% of the federal poverty definition.



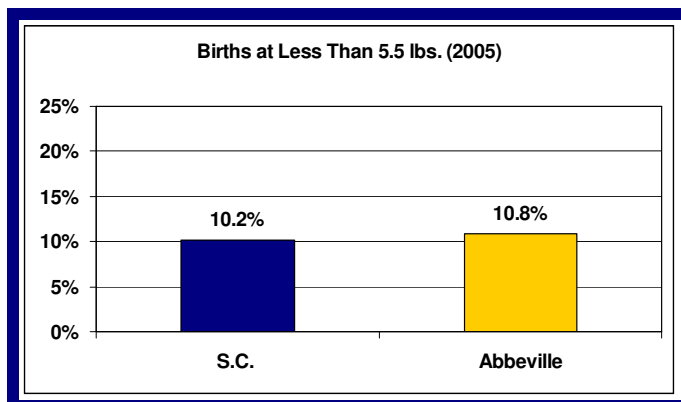
### CHILDREN AT LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (Less Than 5.5 lbs.)

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%

Abbeville County (2005): 10.8%

***Fast Fact:*** 1 in 10 Abbeville County children is born at a weight less than 5.5 lbs. A recent statewide analysis suggests that at least one-third of these children (36%-52% depending on weight category) will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

- Babies born at low weights are often prone to developmental delays associated with early academic failure.
- Many have received inadequate prenatal care and suffer from significant health complications.
- 29 of the 269 children born in Abbeville County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



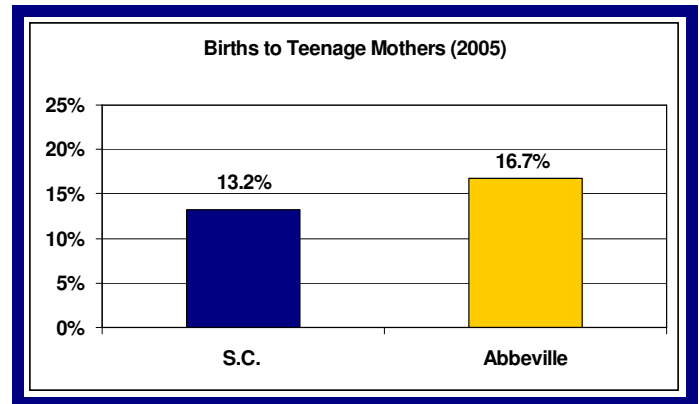
## **BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS**

Statewide Average (2005): 13.2%

Abbeville County (2005): 16.7%

***Fast Fact: Nearly 1 in 5 Abbeville County births is to a mother under 20 years of age. A recent statewide analysis suggests that 43% of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.***

- Teenage parents often lack the maturity and knowledge required to optimally fulfill important parental responsibilities, are less likely to advance their own educational attainment and often fail to advance beyond low-income status.
- 45 of the 269 children born in Abbeville County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



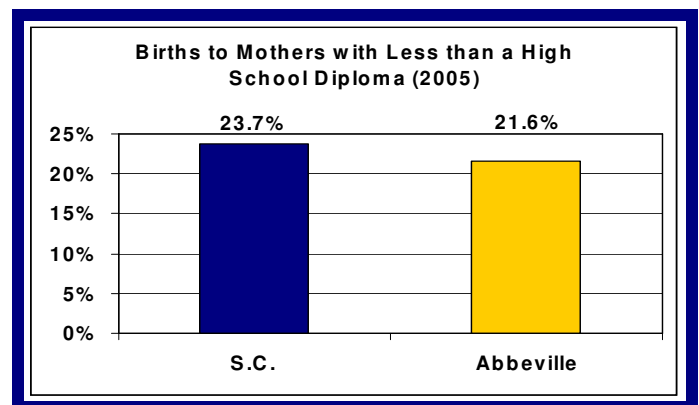
## **BIRTHS TO MOTHERS WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7%

Abbeville County (2005): 21.6%

***Fast Fact: 1 in 5 children in Abbeville County is born to a mother possessing less than a high school diploma. A recent statewide analysis suggests that roughly half (48%) of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.***

- Research suggests that a mother’s own educational attainment is closely linked to the subsequent academic performance of her children.
- 58 of the 269 children born in Abbeville County during 2005 had mothers with less than a high school diploma.



All data provided by the SC Budget and Control Board’s Office of Research and Statistics